



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A MODERN FINNISH CAIN¹

Finland, the "Land of a Thousand Lakes," is now experiencing a most intense literary activity in its own language, the Finnish. This melodious and very peculiar tongue was repressed for centuries upon centuries in favor of Swedish; but, especially through the patriotic efforts of Johan Vilhelm Snellman in the forties of the last century, a great awakening of the national spirit took place. And although this "spring" of Finnish nationalism was quickly followed by a "second winter" of official repression dealing death to the bright hopes of enthusiastic minds, the tenacity of the Finn triumphed in the end after long struggles. During the last forty or fifty years a literature in Finnish has sprung up that surprises one by its wealth, considering the small number of inhabitants and the unfavorable conditions of this land of arctic snows and of a thousand sorrows. There are a number of talented poets, and the prose writers already form a goodly company, which is fast increasing.

The Finn is given to reflection and introspection; a striving for ethical ideals seems part and parcel of his nature. So it is no wonder that social and ethical questions have been handled so often in Finnish literature. *L'art pour l'art* thus far counts few strict votaries in this country of stern realities.

Johannes Linnankoski, a young Finnish writer whose real name is Vihtori Peltonen, exhibits this ethical trend even more strongly than many of his fellows. His greatest book thus far is "Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta," the "Song of the Fiery Red Flower," an intoxicating dithyramb on love and life and at the same time a picture of the ruin wrought by the man whose only desire is to quaff the drink of love to his heart's content. All the splendor and beauty of sexual passion is there but also its terror

¹Arturo Graf has published a good and rather exhaustive article on "La poesia di Caino" (Cain in Poetry) in the *Nuova Antologia* of March 16 and April 1, 1908. The book I speak of he mentions nowhere. As Finnish is not read by many people and the Finnish drama of Cain is really important, a rather full treatment of this work does not seem out of place.

and cruelty. The flood of modern individualism has swept through Linnankoski's soul, not converting it into a swamp choked with the rank weeds of rabid egoism and the poison flower of self-inflation, but fructifying and quickening a good and substantial soil to healthy and life-giving growth. Linnankoski has simply outgrown that puerile individualism which is now so all-powerful and obstreperous; a far nobler and manlier spirit permeates his works, "Love thy fellow-men, work for the happiness of others and the uplifting of the race, fight and overcome thine own self whenever the fulfilment of its desires would mean harm to others. In the *child* there is the expiation of man's errors."

These ideas form also the *finale* of Linnankoski's first work, a drama entitled "Ikuinen taistelu," "The Eternal Struggle."¹ Its central figure is Cain and the drama hinges on the slaying of his brother.

The writer has chosen for his motto the lines of the Swedish poet Rydberg,

Lifvets strid har mening,
Djupaste fall har tröst,

"The fight of life has a meaning, deepest fall a consolation." The drama opens up with a lengthy Prologue, which introduces Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Adah (Cain's sister-wife), Zillah (the sister-spouse of Abel), and their youngest sister Thamar (a girl of eight or nine years). We get a glimpse of the character of these people and see how the catastrophe is to develop out of the conflicting elements in the family of the first human pair. Playful, childlike innocence pervades the beginning of the Prologue. Zillah and Adah are plucking the apples that have just ripened, Zillah up in a full-foliaged tree, her sister down below with a basket in her hand. They chatter about the beautiful fruit and the surprise it will give the others. Abel comes home from tending his flock. Adah bids Zillah sit still in the tree and tells Abel, who is looking for his wife, that she must have run away from him, but finally she has the strange, beautiful bird in the tree answer her bird-like chirping in similar

¹ Porvoo, *Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö*, 1903. Since then several editions.

fashion. Zillah is detected and helped down by her husband. Abel, too, has good news to tell, three little lambs born in the night gladdened his eyes this morning. Soon they are joined by Cain, who is received with demonstrations of most ardent love by Adah and shows the others some ears of ripened corn, specimens of his new crop. The seed he had found in the wilderness and his genius of investigator and inventor was aroused immediately; he planted the corn and here is the result.

Abel. That was indeed a happy chance.

Cain. Chance?—That's true, nearly everything is yet in the hands of chance. But it will not *always* be so.

Abel. I do not understand you.

Cain. Do I myself understand it! This only I understand that everything around us lives, breathes, moves. Nature is full of mysteries. Touch her and she trembles like a bride in the first embrace.

Adah. Incomparable, Cain!

Cain. The earth speaks, the mountain talks, the wood whispers. No, they cry out! Take away the fetters, son of man! they cry out to us. Take away, tear, break—and we will serve thee! . . . Of its own accord! What is it that comes of its own accord? Misfortune, nothing else. Sit with your hands folded and your flock will frisk about in the cornfields and your cornfields will be full of thistles . . . And great Nature round about us! Oh, how it makes my soul boil and strain! Nature there is full of powers, and we here are powerless.

Abel. But what are you aiming at with all these words?

Cain. Into the heights, into the depths! What is there up there, what in the womb of the earth, what in the interior of the mountains?

Cain goes on to expatiate on his dreams of the future. That which seems impossible today may be an accomplished fact tomorrow. Abel on the other hand confesses,

Abel. I am satisfied with the Creator's creation such as it is . . . The sky is clear, the earth full of life, full of fragrant odors—always the same, but nevertheless new every day.

Cain. I see it. But why look at everything only in the light of day? Now everything shines and sparkles, the wood is full of chirping and fluting, the sheep strolls gently in the fields. Only a moment—and the sounds of night and conflict will be heard. Twilight will spread its mantle, the wild beasts will rush out growling from their lairs, the shrubs, the young pines will break under their feet, the noise of a thousand feet will make the plain tremble. . . . There shining teeth glitter,

there blood-thirsty eyes burn like live coals. The small take to flight, your sheep run around senseless inside the paling; howling, bleating, groaning with pain, blood, rattle of death, uh!—That I consider strife.

Abel directs Cain to God, who rules the world and its mysteries. But Cain replies,

What do we know of him. And our parents, who have seen him, did not comprehend him, they only fear him. And how can he who is called light leave us in the dark? If he does not deign to come down to us we will strive to get up to him. As to limits of human understanding, such are unworthy of man. Either perfect insight into the nature of God, or perfect separation from him!

Cain is whittling away on a new kind of bow, with which he intends to shoot a fiery red bird that is continually haunting his imagination. If he get that bird then many things now impossible will be susceptible of accomplishment. Abel fears the tempter Snake may be preparing another snare for mankind. Cain spurns the whole idea of the tempter and says,

Why shouldn't I dare to doubt that story? What is good? What is bad? The nettle! Wasn't that a bad, a noxious weed stinging secretly like a poisonous snake? Now we wear its fibers for a light and easy garment. That same evil thing has become our best friend. As for the paradise our parents forfeited, I do not wail over its loss. The earth is young and we are young, and a voice in my bosom says that we may one day create for ourselves even a new paradise.

But Abel is terrified at such bold words, which seem to be the whisperings of the tempter. Their little sister Thamar comes and tells of her strange experience with somebody in the wood who repeated her every word and whom the others recognize as the echo of her own voice, kind and good, or bad and angry, in accordance with the words and tones of him who is calling. When she is gone Abel says, "How happy is the time of childhood If we only could always be children." But Cain retorts, "To feel and to believe that is the happiness of the child; to will and to search that is—the unhappiness of the man. Choose!"

Zillah. Then I choose happiness—to be like a child, to love all, parents, brothers, sisters, Jehovah, nature—the whole world.¹

¹ Cf. Adah's "O Cain, choose Love," Byron's *Cain*, I, i, 431.

Abel. Yes, are we not like Thamar in the wood? What we are ourselves that also are our surroundings.

Cain. Certainly, but how about fear, evil, the tempter?

Abel. Do not go on, brother, do not go on. The Lord enlighten us!

Cain. Yes, yes, do not go on, do not go on . . . eat, drink, do your work, and die, that is the chief aim.¹

Adah. Oh, I understand Cain so well. I too crave for something more although I never yet dared to say it.²

Cain. Here you have it—we do not dare. We do not dare to plant our whole foot on the surface of this earth—we only creep along on our toes as if we feared to awaken sleeping beings . . . Our present life only a bubble on the stream?³ Never! It is the stream itself . . . My soul is like the whirlpool of a waterfall—nobody answers, only the din of the waters sounds around me.

Zillah recounts a dream of hers that seems to bode evil, especially to Cain. But he declares dreams to be dreams and finally gets into a rage over Abel's and Zillah's weakness of soul and flings the piece of cloth on which Zillah is engaged to the ground because she hides her face behind it in horror at his impious words. Adam, Eve and Thamar come, and Adam, the typical *pater atque dominus familias*, scolds Cain for his eternal questionings and his dissatisfaction with the present state of their knowledge, and for thus disturbing the peace of their otherwise quiet household; he ends by saying, "It is all an unruly boy's stubbornness. Let us pray and all will be well." And Abel offers up a prayer that is, indeed, most beautiful and that asks also for peace of mind. Thus closes the Prologue.

We see Abel and Zillah are the optimists who look only at the sunny side of life; they are not wholly insensible to all the evil and the tantalizing riddles of the world, but they neither like nor dare to face them squarely. They content themselves with expecting everything from the hands of the Lord. But Cain stands on his own feet. An unawed spirit of inquiry and experimentation animates him. His are the great discoveries that

¹ Cf. II, ii, 416 (quotations without indication of the work meant refer to Byron's drama).

² Byron's Adah cannot sympathize with her husband (I, i, 187-90). She has the beautiful heart, but neither the intellect and strength, nor the delight in playful fun of Linnankoski's Adah.

³ This is Abel's view.

have hitherto been made for the comfort of the first human family, as, for instance, the weaving of cloth out of the nettle's fibers and the improvement in raising grain. His great aim is to subject all the forces and products of nature to the will and use of man, and just now he dreams day and night of mastering that mysterious being called fire by us and "the fiery red bird" by him. But he almost suffocates in the depressing atmosphere in which he lives—thousands of mysteries surround him, nobody except Adah sympathizes with the powerful workings of his mighty, fearless soul, Abel is ever prompt with his "Don't touch that," and old Adam tries to thunder the obstinate young fellow into silence. The conflict is there, and the Tempter makes good use of such opportunities.

Lucifer summons his spirits to a nocturnal conference. This "Night Meeting" forms the first act of the drama. Lucifer has been baffled in his great scheme; man fell, but he was too weak to imitate the fallen angels and rise in rebellion against Jehovah. Lucifer has brooded for twenty-five years in order to hit upon some new scheme of revenge; now he has found it and lays it before his servants. Two dozen evil demons embodying the different vices, corruptions, and sinful inclinations of mankind are introduced. This act I consider the weakest spot in the drama. The more or less allegorical figures have a chilling effect, we move in a world of lifeless, bloodless shadows. And wherefore all these pyrotechnics of hell? The "snake" is in our own hearts, as Cain justly supposes, and it certainly doesn't require scores of spirits from the abyss to make a man slay even his own brother. In fact, only a few of them are instrumental in disposing Linnankoski's Cain for the deed. Of course, what we see and hear in the drama is typical of the struggle of all mankind. But Linnankoski's way of bringing out these ideas is wrong so far as it concerns this act. It is to be hoped that the young poet will recast certain parts of the work; so I give no further details about these two dozen devils, the Messrs. Hawksclaw (avarice), Stiffneck (haughtiness), Fiery Red (hatred), Unquenchable (revenge), Hundred Fingers (lust of power), Stonefoot (oppression); the Mesdames Foxear (idle curiosity), Greeneye (envy), Volup-

tuous (sexual desire), and other male and female worthies. Lucifer himself is the proud, tempestuous rebel so well known from Milton's and Byron's pages. But at the same time a most perceptible streak of the buffoon runs through his nature; he can be a most undignified fellow, given to coarse laughter, ludicrous mimicking of pious people, and the use of such expressions as "The devil take it" and similar profane language. He recalls to us frequently some of the traits found in the popular devil and the terrestrial edition *en miniature* of his Satanic majesty—a very bad boy. He says,

You, my demons, are germs in man's blood. He yonder calls us "Evil." The fool! What is evil? I am it. And nevertheless I spring from the same root of origin as everything else. . . . Where is the boundary line? Yes, the boundary line, O thou Master of the Six Days, that does not exist at all. No, no, it exists, but *I* am it. I am the boundary line that opens the eyes and conducts man to the waves of the Stream of Life. . . . Do I hate man? Why should I? He has been created without his asking for it just like all the others. Do I desire his suffering? Why should I? Has he done anyone a wrong? . . . I wish man well, but how can I help it that joy seems to be tied to suffering—I cannot separate these two sisters from each other. And why should not man also suffer if his sufferings are requited? And I will requite them. Let them suffer and struggle, but let them also take deep draughts of enjoyment. So kindle the torch of life! I know it is the torch of sorrow, but it is also the torch of warmth, therefore they will suffer gladly. . . . And let them dance! . . . There is but one fundamental thought: down with the phantoms, break in pieces the slave's fetters, make nature free!

Lucifer's new plan of revenging himself on the Creator in his chief handiwork Man is based on the great law that he has observed to govern all the beings of this world—heredity. Together with his spirits he subjects the representatives of the human species to a close scrutiny. Both Adam and Eve are a pair of old fools now, and one of the demons remarks of poor Eve, "O that stupid goose! Why did she have to nibble at that apple *first* although she was created *second*? If she had only offered it to her old man and waited whether anything would have been left for her!" Abel is a mealy-mouthed preacher, a tender of sheep and himself a sheep, Zillah a sweet innocent, just tasting

the first raptures of love, Thamar a child, but Cain and Adah—there's a pair for you! They came into being when the sap of the apple was yet boiling in the veins of Adam and Eve.¹ Adam and Eve can have no more children, Zillah is as yet not pregnant, but Adah is. So speedy action is necessary, Abel must be prevented from begetting offspring., the whole human race to come will then consist of Cain's, the rebel's, descendants and therefore of rebels against God—in accordance with that law of heredity. The evil spirits are not allowed to kill Abel, so he must fall by the hand of his brother. Even the demons are appalled by the boldness of this scheme which promises so many fine consequences and such possibilities of revenge on Jehovah. But how is Cain to be moved to do the deed, loving his brother as he does? Lucifer answers,

Cain's soul is overflowing with the craving for knowledge and freedom and with the presentiment of his own power. These I shall wing for flight. He dreams of a new world, a world of genius, work, and domination. From this I shall start. I shall immerse him deeper in his own dreams, and out of these and out of what I foresee by virtue of my own knowledge I shall create a dazzling, beautiful picture of the future (of the human race). And now when this thought burns and glows red and Abel is all water, humility and honey of the fear of the Lord, then I shall hurl one against the other so that it will give a whiz.

Lucifer's subjects, Pride, Love of Self, Flattery, Deceit, Envy, Calumny, Lust of Power, Avarice, Hate, Revenge, Voluptuousness, Jealousy, etc., also exult in the prospect of being able to influence Cain. They applaud Lucifer's plan that Cain is to slay his brother at the sacrifice the brothers are about to offer up to Jehovah in return for the blessing bestowed on their flocks and fields. "That altar is *his*, he expects the smoke of the sacrifice and wheedling, but he will get—a slap in the face."

The second act is entitled "The Red Bird." Cain is working with a kind of wooden mattock in his newly cleared field, but the prongs break. He is in despair. "Everything breaks—our whole life is like that—it doesn't hold. But *could* it not hold?" Here a Strange Voice whispers, "Could it not hold?"

¹ Cf. Act iii, ll. 506 ff.

Cain. Is there no material that would surely hold? That would eat its way through soil, through tree, through stone . . . if one only could find it.

The Voice. And why should one not find it? It is found already.

Cain. Yes, yes, some things are found. . . . But the red bird still soars in the air.

He inserts a drill in the string of his bow, puts it on the wood, and begins to whirl the drill around. At last the living spark leaps forth, the dry moss at the point of the drill flames up—man can produce fire. In the ecstasy of his delight Cain can hardly believe his senses; he repeats the experiment three times before he is satisfied. He sits down near the fire thus kindled and looks at it in a reverie.

Cain. In thee there dwells a soul—now for the first time I comprehend this. Thou movest, thou speakest, if only I could understand thy language. Thou carriest my thoughts along into the distant future.

The Voice (as if continuing Cain's thoughts). Why shouldn't I foresee all that?—the wonders and secrets of the future—how fire was at first a little spark, how it grew to be a world power—

Cain—how everything springs from the spark. Yes, yes. Of all these things I have a presentiment, but how am I to *see* what my hope speaks of?

Lucifer now rises out of the ground behind Cain and remains through the whole act behind his back, unseen by Cain, only speaking to him. His words either start new thoughts or complete thoughts already sprung up in Cain. This dialogue between Cain and Lucifer, which extends through the entire act, is, in a way, only the communing of Cain with his own soul. At the same time Lucifer in visions shows and explains to Cain the things that he so ardently desires to behold—the great inventions of the future, which are all due to fire, the force of nature which Cain just now has learned to call forth at will. Cain sees the miners of the future at work in the entrails of mountains and listens to their proud song of the treasure they thus bring to light. After this vision has disappeared the songs of the Spirits of Iron and of blacksmiths are heard and Cain's eye is met by the marvels of a foundry and a smithy. The iron mattocks, axes, plows, and other farm implements forged by the blacksmiths call

forth his delight and admiration. Thereupon a glimpse of the goldsmith's art is afforded him. But sights still more wonderful are to follow. On a clear lake a rather large ship formed like a water bird with eyes of fire glides along. Steam issues from the bill of this bird, in it are many people, who wave their handkerchiefs, and a band of musicians is playing. When this vision has vanished, a long, loud whistling is heard and a locomotive shaped like a horse passes before Cain. Fire are the eyes of this miraculous animal, whirling steam is its mane, its sides are full of round windows, out of which people are looking.¹ Fire is the soul animating all these marvels, and fire is the visible symbol of the mind of man. While Cain is still musing over this, again the sounds of music are wafted to his ear. An airship in the form of a flying bird and illumined by lights of various colors floats through the air. In it sit many people who wave their hats and cheer. Cain is almost speechless with joyful astonishment, but soon he recollects that there is nevertheless a realm into which man cannot peer, the beautiful world of the stars. But Lucifer causes a number of these heavenly bodies to speed by the eye of Cain. Cain realizes that fire is the life and essence also of these seas of splendor, and filled with solemn rapture he expresses his wish to be submerged by this ocean of light when he is to die.² Lucifer tries to lead him on to the conviction that the whole earth is not God's, but man's. Cain remonstrates, saying that the earth and man are dependent on God for rain and sunshine. "Yes, now, but not in the future." And Lucifer bids Cain shoot into the clouds with his bow, whereupon rain begins to pour down, and he even raises before Cain's eyes a brilliant sun made of fire by the hand of man, which illumines the whole landscape. That clinches the argument, Cain finally concludes,

Man is the lord of the earth. . . . He himself creates a paradise, there he suffers, struggles, and rejoices—always as his own works deserve.

Lucifer. But if the little snake should glide also into that paradise.

Cain. The snake? Then it is true after all—?

Lucifer. —that . . . ?

¹ The reader will be reminded of a chapter in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

² Cf. II, i, 98 ff.

Cain. —that there is evil in the world.

Lucifer. It is true. But not in earth, tree or beast, but in man himself.

Cain. Is that it? Something of that sort I always suspected. But its shape and manner?

Lucifer. Hardly perceptible. One distinguishing mark nevertheless is sure.

Cain. Which?

Lucifer. This, that evil always is at variance with endeavors for the public good.

Cain. Ah, such it is—that reminds me of the story of the fallen angels.

Lucifer (embarrassed, but with quiet scorn). Yes, yes—and the same spirit appears in man.

Cain. Should that be possible?

Lucifer. Possible after all. That great aim requires great exertion—but if not all do exert themselves? Some are lazy shepherds.¹

Now Lucifer has Cain at the point where he wants him. Most artfully, and without ever mentioning Abel, he insinuates to Cain that there are others who are not only indifferent, but inimical to the great schemes the glowing soul of Cain harbors and seeks to realize for the advancement of the human race; that they even try to take away from their toiling brethren what they possess—their fields and meadows, the peace of their homes—their wives. They reap what the others sow and say, “The Lord gave it in his mercy.” They even oppose the others and the progress of mankind, and their formula is, “In the name of the Lord.” When Cain is thus thoroughly stirred with indignation, Lucifer conjures up before him a phantom battle of the future. The manly instincts of Cain are roused still more strongly by this spectacle and made to pant for the undying glory of the brave fighter. And a still more tempting prospect opens up: the earth thus won by valiant strife will be the victor’s, there man will enjoy the fruit of his painful struggle: the new paradise, and in that paradise there will be the reward of rewards for the hero—beautiful woman, and not one woman only, but many, many, as witnessed by Cain (whose simple soul had thought hitherto “One

¹Cf. Gessner’s “Tod Abels,” in Kürschner’s *Deutsche Nationalliteratur*, pp. 109, 144, 150 ff., and for the following the whole dream of Cain in the fourth canto.

woman for one man and she his helpmate") in a new vision, which discloses to his hungering eyes the hero in the midst of a festival in his honor and surrounded by slightly clad young damsels that offer him the intoxicating cup. And the burden of their songs is, "Love and enjoy as long as you can, even if heaven and earth should thus go to ruin; for life is short. To the victor the cup!" Cain is fully in sympathy with such a philosophy and he exclaims, "Man is the lord of joy and pleasure. . . . Now I know whither my path leads and what is my goal. Out of the way with all impediments! . . . Fly, thou red bird! I am the lord of the earth." We see, the red bird is also the symbol of proud, self-gratifying dominion, of the *Herrenmenschentum*.

Intoxicated with these thoughts and feelings of the superman Cain returns to his hut, but he evidently is not one of those Napoleons or Cesare Borgias so fondly dreamed about by Nietzsche. He is in many ways an extremely modern man, a high-strung *Stimmungsmensch*. The reaction sets in. The next act opens up with the fatal sacrifice. Cain begs Abel that they omit it this time, he is so dejected, cannot collect his thoughts for the holy ceremony, does not even know why he should thank the Lord,¹ instead of thanking his own fists that have to wrench everything from the unwilling earth, thinks that work, too, is a burnt offering. But Abel in his childlike narrow-mindedness urges him to engage in this "religious exercise" for the very reason that his mind is so perturbed; it will restore calm to his troubled soul. And finally he mentions that Adah, too, thought Cain might thus at last be filled with a feeling of peace. Cain's jealous suspicion is aroused, his blood begins to boil. "Adah! Why, really—! Do you settle what I have to do—*thou and Adah?*" Finally his anger subsides, his gloom returns, and he again begs to be released from his promise. But Abel is inexorable and bids him choose one of the two altars that are raised for their sacrifices. Cain requests Abel to choose for him, Abel declines because of Cain's birth-right, at last Cain says, "Be it as

¹ Cf. I, i, 28; III, 109 ff. Graf informs us that also in Lope de Vega's *Creacion del mundo y primer culpa* Cain declares that he can stand on his own feet and does not owe anything to God. The attitude of Cain in the Towneley Mysteries is somewhat similar.

you wish—I have chosen.”¹ Hitherto Abel, who has to guard the fire they once obtained by a lucky stroke of lightning, used to give Cain a live coal for kindling fire on such occasions. Lucifer and the Archangel Michael appear on the scene, both invisible to the two brothers; they begin to contend for Cain’s soul. Lucifer urges him to refuse Abel’s divine coal and apply his newly discovered method of producing fire, which is as yet unknown to the other human beings. Cain struggles with his own self; on the one hand there is his suspicion of Abel, awakened especially by Abel’s mention of Adah and by a seemingly too great familiarity between the two on the previous evening, on the other hand, his love for his brother and the almost unmistakable proofs of Abel’s innocence, good nature, and piety. Michael admonishes Cain to desist from offering up the sacrifice on account of his unfit state of mind, Lucifer goads him on, and the devil can quote Scripture, too, for his argument. Michael exhorts him to humility, Lucifer awakens his pride. And pride carries it; he refuses the coals offered by Abel and proceeds to kindle fire by means of his drill and bow. Abel is surprised at the new discovery, but after a few moments admonishes him to thank the Lord for this wonderful gift. This causes Cain’s wrath to flame up again. “*I made the bow.*” Finally their sacrifices are lighted and Abel asks Cain to begin to pray, Cain being the elder. But Cain begs Abel to take the lead, as he is not used to such things.² The younger brother launches forth into a lengthy, submissive, and indeed very excellent prayer, which in the drama is frequently interrupted by silent fervor, by the speeches of Michael and Lucifer, and by Cain’s prayer. And this is the way Cain prays,

Jehovah, thou who art honesty and truth, hear an honest man’s prayer. I am not an expert at praying, nor do I simply comply with a good custom, but my heart is full of anguish. Also I do not ask thee for mercy or gifts, but I should like to keep myself what I obtained by dint of my own exertions. I want to be an honest, straightforward man, both with thee and others; I do not object to suffering for my own deeds, but I hope I shall not have to suffer for the deeds of others. Give us a fair chance to work and struggle on earth, but we ourselves desire to enjoy also down

¹ Cf. III, 188-210.

² Cf. III, 220-23.

here the fruits of our work and struggle. I have never seen thee and I know nothing of thee, but I believe that thou art right-minded. Now we want to keep the spot that we are tilling and do not want to be driven forth into the wilderness. I thank thee that thou hast not given everything to us ready made, but hast allowed room for the exercise of thy gift, the intellect—I rejoice over those victories that we have gained over the creation created by thee, over that creation which thou in thy mercy hast—

Lucifer. —created barren, full of blood-thirsty wild beasts, an eternal battle-field.

Lucifer has been communicating impious and disturbing thoughts to Cain during his whole prayer, while Michael has tried to lead him back to the path of good. The conflict almost drives him mad, and by this last remark of the Evil Spirit Cain is so disconcerted that he cannot go on. Abel continues all the time in his divinely serene and humble devotion. Cain finally stammers in heart-rending anguish, "Jehovah! I do not know—I do not understand—here is the offering for Thee—the offering of work—the offering of sweat—the offering of anguish." In this moment the sacrifice of Abel sends up a clear, high flame and Abel's words ring out triumphantly, "Praised and exalted be the Lord," etc. But poor Cain's offering will not burn, a gust of wind sweeps along and carries the smoke into Cain's eyes. Goaded on by Lucifer he exclaims, "Dost thou mock me, Jehovah? Dost thou despise an honest man's offering? Dost thou love laziness, blood, the pain of the sacrificial sheep?"¹ A terrible fit of rage overpowers Cain, he takes a billet of wood, beats and scatters the altar with it, shouting:

Cain. Thou creator of creeping beings (beats)! Thou god of fawners (beats)! Thou sender of the serpent (beats)! Thou scorner of honest work (beats)! Thou eater of meat and blood (beats)! Thou (beats) thou (beats) thou—"

Abel. Cain, Cain! What are you doing? Do not touch the altar, it is consecrated to the Lord.

Cain. Don't meddle with my affairs—the altar is mine (beats).

But Abel runs toward him with outstretched hands, intending to quiet him, and exclaims, "In the name of the Lord I set myself against this profanation of the holy. . . ." *Cain.* "In the

¹Cf. Byron and the last paragraph of Gessner's third canto.

name of the Lord! Now I understand what you are. Out of my way!" *Abel*. "Not a step!" Cain rushes toward him crying in a voice that almost chokes with rage, "You don't want to? Out of my way, devil!" and strikes him. Abel falls and Lucifer declares, "I, I have won."¹

The second half of this act is entitled "The Thunderstorm." Zillah and Adah stand near Abel's body, Cain sits on the ground at a little distance, wrapped in deep gloom. Zillah, the leaves of the trees, the flowers, the grass, and the ephemerae wail in lyrical effusions over the death of Abel. Adah, who has gone to inform the others, returns with Adam, Eve, and Thamar. *Adam*. "My God, what is this?" *Adah*. "Death—death has come!" They first deem it the work of the snake or of the evil powers.² But when Adam finds out that Cain has done the deed he curses him in the sublimely gruesome fashion of the old Hebrew writers (turned to such good account also by Byron's Eve).³ Eve and Adah try to pacify him but he rebuffs Eve with the reproach, "Thou eater of the apple, thou listener to the serpent!" and goes on:

Accursed be he who raised his hand against his brother and broke the holy cord of life—ten times accursed! Greedy earth that drankest this innocent blood, open thy mouth and swallow the murderer of his brother alive!—No, let him live for a hundred generations! Like a hunted wild beast let him wander from place to place!⁴ . . . heaven, deny him thy dew! may the ears of corn and the fruit that he grows drip blood!—may the water in his spring be blood.⁵ And accursed be his seed, may it dry up in his loins!

¹ Cf. III, 288 ff.

² Cf. III, 370 and III, 381 ff.

³ It certainly seems better that Adam, and not Eve, utter these maledictions. Byron's own sad experiences with his mother and his rake's career are to be held accountable for the terrible curse of Eve in his drama, which I consider a stain on this magnificent poem. Mothers are not given to cursing their own sons and least of all if they happen to be Cains—the black sheep of the family. In the "Erschlagene Abel" of the *Kraftgenie* Maler Müller, Adam after hearing from his son's own lips the avowal of his guilt, wants to kill him and an angel has to lay hold of his hair and throw him on the ground in order to prevent him. Cain himself hurls wild reproaches at his parents—him they hated, Abel they loved, Abel has robbed him of his sacred rights. One is reminded of Klinger's *Geschwister*. This sketch of Maler Müller's is not mentioned by Graf. Here, too, Maler Müller was pricked by the laurels of Gessner, to whom he owes not a little. Klopstock, in his drama *Der Tod Adams*, has Cain come to Adam just before Adam's death in order to curse him (*Zweite Handlung, Fünfter Auftritt*).

⁴ I distinctly remember that Jean Paul somewhere identifies Ahasverus, the Wandering Jew with Cain. So Hamerling mistakes in supposing that he himself is the first to have done this (in his *Ahasverus in Rom*).

⁵ Cf. III, 432.

Here Cain interposes, but Adam continues:

. . . . Beget children, beget so many that they shall fill the wilderness and may they do by thee as thou hast done by thy brother!¹ And when the hour of departing this life arrives for thee, may it be full of dread and terror! May the earth deny a last shelter to thy wretched body, may the storm scatter thy bones broadcast over the fields and may invisible teeth tear to pieces thy vile soul from eternity to eternity!

Eve and Adah again intercede for Cain, but Adam commands Adah to leave Cain. She resists most firmly. Adam calls them a lot of rebels against himself and Jehovah. Finally even Zillah implores forgiveness for the slayer of her husband, and Eve addresses Adam with words so powerful that he is deeply moved and allows Adah to assist in carrying the body away. Cain is left alone with the upbraiding and lamenting voices of the wind, the birds, the trees, Mother Earth, the waves, and the storm that is gathering.² Adah returns to her husband, he bids her leave him as the others have left him, and fly from the curse that is upon him. He is tormented by keen remorse and black despair. He cannot understand why he killed his brother, he cannot comprehend that gentle, kind Abel should have been a living man a few moments ago and now—dead and cold! The murderer did not realize that this would be the effect of his blow.³ "Man is like a mouse—burrows, runs about—a big foot comes down—all is over. This is man, the image of God." The thunderstorm now is above their heads, but Cain calls Jehovah a mean rascal and shakes his fist in the face of thundering and lightning heaven, "These are still free. Man against Man! Yet I am Cain." Poor Adah in her horror finally succeeds in hurrying him to their hut, while she prays, "My God, my God, do not deliver us over to darkness."

The fourth and last act bears the title "Out into the Wilderness." Cain and Adah are sitting under a tree ready to start out.

¹ According to an old tradition Cain was really killed by one of his descendants, Lamech. See Graf, *La poesia di Caino*, pp. 193, 194.

² A thunderstorm after the crime also in Gessner's and in Maler Müller's "Abel."

³ Cf. III, 323 ff.

Adah. Look around you, Cain. The air is light and cool—it calls. On the shoulders of the wood there is the shining mantle of the moon—it calls. And you are again calm and desire to live—we are ready.

Cain. I desire to live since life is a necessity.

But he goes on to complain that something had snapped in him, that all his force seemed spent, that he could not brace himself any more, even by enthusiasm for the future and for freedom, for he had sinned grievously against freedom by depriving another of the freedom most essential of all—of the freedom to live.

Cain. The thought of the future is dead within me—and so am I myself dead. . . .¹

Adah. And nevertheless we *have* to look forward—into the future.

Cain. Into emptiness.—Oh, Oh, Oh, I did not only kill my brother, but my own child—my future.

Adah. Your child? It . . . (Her face shows that her mind is deeply moved, and gradually a strange light gathers on it. She presses her hand against both sides of her heart and listens.) Cain! It lives! It is found! It is in me!

Cain. What? Are you out of your mind?

Adah. I am—from joy. Life! Victory! It lives, it *moves*. Everything lives, moves, vibrates, sparkles. Put your hand here, Cain!

Cain. You rave. What moves?

Adah. Life—the future—you, I—Jehovah moves within me. Don't you understand. *The child! Our child!* That of which we dreamed so much, but which we had forgotten in our sorrow. Put your hand here, Cain!

Cain (horrified). This hand?

Adah. Just that—here, under my heart. With it you feel the heartbeats of the future and these heartbeats will in turn also make your own heart beat.

Cain (trembling with emotion). My God, it lives, it lives. (He grasps Adah's hand fervidly, looks deep into her eyes.) Mother!

Adah. Father!

Cain (suddenly withdraws from her). Father? But his father is the murderer of his own brother!

Adah. Why such words again? Give me your hand, Cain—no, father, father, a thousand times father! What part does the child have in our errors? At that time dark thoughts did not yet move within you. It is the best that was in you and given in love. Everything that was good in me and you lives in it.

¹ III, 347, 348.

Cain. These heartbeats may just as well be the wild pulsations of future sins.

Adah. Never! Can't you believe that forgiveness is possible, that this is the token of mercy and consolation, the message of a new and purer world?

Cain. I too have been pure, of me too they hoped.¹

Adah. And your road is not yet traversed to the end—the child's path only begins. Let us love it, and by the power of this love it will walk a new road and open up also to us the path of expiation.

Cain. The path of expiation? Do you think so?

Adah. Not only do I think so, but a voice in my bosom cries and asseverates that it is possible this way.

Cain. That the child was . . . ?

Adah (rejoicingly). —that new goal! Just think—*our* child, maybe a boy. It is pure and innocent, the seed of the future generation, which will take in hand what we ourselves could not do on account of our errors.

Cain. It will continue where we had to leave off, will realize what we dreamed of . . . ?

Adah. Exactly so. The spark of hope that we take out with us into the wilderness.

Cain (with assurance). And for which we will *suffer and struggle*.

They go on discussing the new and great thing that has come into their lives and that deepens, strengthens, and ennoble even their love. But soon Cain again falls into blackest dependency. His crime is too great to remain unavenged. "The brother's hand against the brother; why not in the following generation the son's hand against the father; that would only be—" The Archangel Michael appears, announces to Cain that God's curse is neither upon him, nor upon his descendants, and imprints the mark on his forehead which is to keep others from harming Cain. "And now, Cain, go thy way and by struggling obtain expiation for thyself.² Let him who wants to be master of the world first learn to be master of himself."

Before they depart Eve and Zillah come to bid them farewell. Eve complains about the wicked snake, but Cain expresses his belief that the snake is in man's own bosom and tells her that the angel of the Lord appeared to them and bade him struggle with himself and vanquish himself. Adah whispers her secret to the

¹ Cf. III, 489 ff.

² Better, *Erkämpfe dir Versöhnung*.

two women, and these glad tidings mitigate to some extent their keen sorrow. Then the two set out for the wilderness, from which is heard the roar of the lion. On the way Cain again gives utterance to his brooding thoughts and questionings. "What is life? What is man? What is God?" Eve stands before Cain's deserted hut, weeping and looking after her children who are going into exile. Michael approaches and comforts her, also announcing to her the birth of another son similar to Abel. When the two women have gone Lucifer steps up to Michael with cutting sarcasms. The angel of the Lord points out to him that he made a mistake again, but Lucifer answers his arguments and finishes by saying, "You forgot that I too go with them into the wilderness." Cain comes running back to get his bow for kindling fire—"comrade and brother anyhow, no matter what has happened." Michael in the course of his last conversation with Lucifer says,

Only he is the original being, who is the origin of all, the others are *forms*—and likewise thou also. . . . It is true, for awhile thou canst extinguish the light, but even in the night they will sigh for their original union (with God, whom Michael declares to be love). And from that sigh will be born the child of hope—the new time. It rises slowly, but it rises nevertheless, and the hour of freedom will one day strike for the suffering. The universe will again chime into harmony, heaven and earth will draw nigh each other; hatred, persecution will vanish, the lion and the lamb will walk side by side on the pasture—the spirit of the Lord will fill everything. And when this hour shall once have come, then also thy end will have come—thou too, thou wild voice of battle and strife, wilt dissolve into the same harmony, wilt disappear.

But Lucifer denies,

I am what I am—I am as eternal as thy lord. And as long as I exist, let heaven and earth tremble before me.

Michael. Then thou wilt not cease sooner?

Lucifer. No.

Michael. Then our struggle will be perpetual.

Lucifer. Eternal!

Lucifer and Michael vanish. The edge of the horizon brightens and the sun rises casting a red light over the landscape. A bird begins to twitter in a tree.

We see here we have no Byronian Manicheism or dualism, but rather a kind of pantheism. It seems clear enough that only *Lucifer* thinks that the battle between good and evil will go on for all eternity. It will certainly go on as long as the universe, the world of phenomena exists; in that sense it will be perpetual. But Michael, the exponent of the highest truth, predicts the final great consummation, the ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων of Origen and others. But also from the point of view of mankind it will be the eternal struggle. Man's lot is to fall and to rise again, his mission, to overcome the evil in his own nature, to work for the material, intellectual, and ethical advancement of the race; above all to increase continually in nobility of soul and to contribute in this way—the most effectual of all—toward making the world a better and happier world and toward developing a higher human species. This is part of a fundamental difference between Byron and Linnankoski. Byron's Cain is an exponent of *Weltschmerz*.¹ He also "always mourns for Paradise," that is, Paradise lost. Linnankoski's Cain doesn't care a straw about that old story of Eden. His whole fiery, dreaming soul is bent on creating a paradise of his own. Byron's Cain is of the same kith and kin as Naciketas, the ardent questioner in the *Kathopanishad*, who yearns for a solution of the great riddle, "What is death?" Everything in Byron's drama centers about the thought of death, and the deep tragedy of Cain's life is this that he whose feelings and thoughts rebel so strongly and incessantly against death and who replies to Lucifer's question, "What sate nearest thy heart?"—"The mystery of Death" (II, i, 138 ff.), is the very one who first introduces death to mankind. The climax of the drama terminates and is summed up in the cry of Zillah, "Death is in the world" and in the words of Cain,

And who hath brought him there?—I, who abhor
The name of death so deeply that the thought
Empoisoned all my life, before I knew
His aspect—I have led him there, and given
My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his

¹ Cf. I, i, 83 ff.; II, ii, 279; III, 37.

Inexorable claim without my aid.
 I am awake at last—a dreary dream
 Had maddened me;—but *he* shall ne’er awake!

(III, 371 ff.)

Linnankoski’s Cain is only concerned with life. His musings about death are either incidental to his musings about life or are brought about by his own bloody deed. The eye of Byron’s Cain looks backward into the past; and Lucifer, too, shows him chiefly past worlds, for even the world to be peopled by the dead of the future (now already partly peopled by pre-Adamite men and animals) is a world of the past; of “present worlds” there is only the vision of the heavenly bodies. Of the future there is really nothing, in spite of Lucifer’s promise, “I will show . . . the history of past and present and of future worlds” (II, ii, 23 ff.). Linnankoski’s Cain consecrates himself entirely to the future, the better, brighter, greater, nobler future, and to *him* Lucifer reveals the glorious achievements the future has in store for mankind.

Most closely connected with these fundamental differences is the solution of the greatest and most difficult problem in the story of Cain, “What made him slay his brother?” The psychological explanation apparently intended by the Bible did not satisfy Byron. He says,

Cain is a proud man: if Lucifer promised him kingdoms, etc., it would *elate* him: the object of the Demon is to *depress* him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the catastrophe, from mere *internal* irritation, not premeditation, or envy of Abel (which would have made him contemptible), but from the rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against Life, and the author of Life, than the mere living.¹

This “internal irritation” vented on an unoffending being near and dear to Cain may not have seemed “contemptible” to Byron, who himself was given to unaccountable “fits of rage,” but Lady Byron probably took a somewhat different view, and to us it will seem at least slightly puerile. Linnankoski is certainly much

¹ Letter to Moore, November 3, 1821.

more fortunate in his motivation of the deed. With him Cain is elated by his own achievements, and his pride and self-sufficiency contribute powerfully toward bringing about the catastrophe. He is hardly susceptible of envy,¹ but very strong is his feeling for right and justice and honesty, he is enraged at the thought that some one else might take away the fruit of his own toil. Woman and lust also allure him, and the suspicion that another might rob him of his wife proves fatal. He has also been "elated" by the magnificent prospects of the future shown to him by Lucifer; his finer self exults in all the good that will arise for mankind out of his all-important mastery over fire; and the more animal part of him anticipates a world of delight shed by woman and glory—and now he is thrust back into the narrow atmosphere of Abel's childlike and uncomprehending piety that stifles and exasperates him. But most powerful of all, in preparing him for the bloody act, is the idea that ruin threatens his noble work for the benefit of future generations. Linnankoski's Cain is a *man*, Byron's *ein genialer Junge*, or rather almost a woman, thus resembling his great creator, in whose image he was made. We also need not wonder that Byron's Cain is hardly anything else but an idle dreamer. He hates toil, and his good, divine Adah no doubt had to confess time and again,

Thou hast laboured not
This morn; but I have done thy task. (I, i, 137, 138)

Linnankoski's Cain, on the other hand, stands for work, work raised in our own times from her Cinderella position to her princely rank. Carlyle and others of that ilk have not lived in vain. Nor has Nietzsche, notwithstanding all his extravagances. We have profited, and Linnankoski has profited. A comparison

¹ Byron's *Cain* confesses that *he is*, II, ii, 351 ff. Cain is impelled by envy or jealousy also in the Armenian Legend. "Adam and Eve loved Abel dearly. Cain was jealous of their partiality. He wished to kill his brother, but knew not how. Satan took the form of a raven, picked a quarrel with another raven, and in Cain's presence cut his opponent's throat with a pointed black pebble. Cain picked up the stone, hid it in his girdle, proposed to his brother a walk on the mountain, and there cut his throat with a pebble. The peasants of Armenia to this day call flints 'Satan's nails,' and conscientiously break every pointed black one they may find." To wash away the blood from his hands Cain held them in a waterfall "day and night, summer and winter, during a whole year, without sleep and without food, but at the end of that time they were still as crimson as on the day of the crime."—LUCY M. J. GARNETT, *The Women of Turkey and Their Folk-Lore*, London, 1893, Vol. I, p. 274.

of his drama with Byron's points to many things. Byron's *Cain* was written in 1821; in 1819 Schopenhauer published his principal work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, and at that very time Leopardi's wonderful genius surprised Italy. The atmosphere was impregnated with *Weltschmerz*. But Linnankoski has only been quickened, not overpowered, by Nietzscheanism or individualism, which is only one of the *roads* that may, and ultimately surely will, lead to something greater, though in itself it is neither noble, nor new, for India had her most consistent and radical individualists thousands of years ago. He utilizes also other material, and Byron's *Cain* has perceptibly influenced his drama, but the structure thus reared is his own.¹

It was a happy thought to make Cain also a kind of Prometheus—the bringer of fire, the first great pathfinder, whose intellect is not only busied with philosophic speculations but also, and above all, with practical life. He is full of enterprise and vigor, whereas Byron's Cain, this first man born of woman, staggers under the heavy *Weltmüdigkeit* of an old, old world—an aristocratic *elegant*, younger and nobler brother of Childe Harold. Byron's poem, in spite of its failings the most beautiful of all of his productions, moves in stately majesty and elevating sublimity along the heights, Linnankoski's prose drama is pitched in a far more terrestrial key—we find ourselves in a simpler, much more primitive world. Even his devils have a rustic tinge, and Cain is a brilliant-minded sturdy peasant. Of all the existing poetic treatments of the subject these two seem to be the greatest—Byron's magnificent chant of death and Linnankoski's triumphant psalm of life: the inspiring hymn of the eternal struggle.²

JOHN JACOB MEYER

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

¹ Besides the similarities pointed out, some others could be quoted. Still we must not forget that human nature, the principal source of every true poet, is everywhere the same. If the spirit of ever-unsatisfied painful prying into the mysteries of the world animates also Linnankoski's Cain, he resembles Byron's Cain and every human being that belongs to a higher intellectual order. If also Linnankoski's Adah clings to her blood-stained husband she is like many another noble and loving woman. Other *poesie di Caino* besides Byron's drama do not seem to have influenced Linnankoski.

² I hope my words are not understood to imply that I consider Linnankoski a greater poet than Byron. It may be mentioned that Linnankoski's drama, like so many Finnish books, would profit here and there by compression. *Dichten*, "to compose poetry," not in its etymology, but in its sense, is the same as *dichten*, "to condense;" *Dichtung* ist *Verdichtung*.